

Hengeler rules out further partnership changes after non-equity introduction

Hengeler Mueller's co-managing partner has ruled out any further dramatic changes to its partnership, as the German firm gears up to welcome its first salaried members in the new year.

The introduction of a salary partner tier in **May 2023** was a significant deviation from the conservative culture at Hengeler Mueller. It stood as a notable accomplishment of co-managing partners Bernd Wirbel and Thomas Mueller's first term in their roles.

Wirbel and Mueller felt the introduction of the salary partner tier was a vital move to protect profitability and reward star performers in the ever-competitive German market.

Speaking to *The Lawyer*, Wirbel said: "When we entered into our roles, we said we have one goal. We don't want to lose any of our well-performing partners to any other firm.

"Our goal is to keep the profitability high and keep our culture. The [introduction of] salaried partners was a fundamental change at our firm. We never had salary partners before and that was one of our goals to introduce the new role in our system. We achieved that last year and were very happy the partners approved that."

The Lawyer understands there has been a grandfathering process since the announcement, but that the first lawyers going through the partner track could be set to join in the January promotions round.

Previously, all lawyers joining the Hengeler partnership would instantly become members of the equity.

The new system marks a complete shift from that wherein all prospective partners will spend two years as non-equity partners after serving six years as an associate with the firm. They will then have their business case to join the equity assessed after that period.

Wirbel made clear that there will be no implementation of an 'Up or Out' policy that can be found at US firms such as Kirkland & Ellis.

He added: "After this, we have no plans to introduce any further ground-breaking changes. There is always one big challenge in each term."

Wirbel and Müller were elected to the co-managing partner roles in 2022, taking up their duties on 1 July of that year. Co-managing partners at Hengeler Mueller serve four-year terms meaning the pair have just under two years remaining.

They replaced incumbents M&A partner Georg Frowein and equity capital markets partner Rainer Krause. Krause has since retired from the firm, while Frowein stepped back into the day-to-day partnership.

By [Alex Taylor](#) 8 August 2024 06:40
[Law firms Europe News Hengeler Mueller](#)